

Editorial



This issue marks the official transition of journal leadership as Editor-in-Chief from Jo De Waele to me. I am honored to become the Editor of the *International Journal of Speleology* (IJS), which is now at the end of its forty-ninth year of publication. Our ability to succeed and grow, especially over the last 8 years, has been a direct product of Jo's energy and vision. His leadership has been invaluable in setting the recent direction for our journal and building the quality publication that I now inherit. I am grateful for this and am pleased to announce that Jo will continue to work with us as an Associate Editor for the *Physical Speleology* section of the journal. Tanja Pipan of Karst Research Institute in Postojna (Slovenia) will join him as an Associate Editor, handling the *Biospeleology* submissions.

On behalf of the *IJS* readers and authors, I want to thank Todd Chavez and the production team (Carol Ann Borchert, Julie Fielding, and Brenna Mathiasen) at the University of South Florida (USF) Libraries who contributed to the rebirth of our journal by including it as an open access journal within the Scholar

Commons service at USF. I also want to thank the Editorial Board members, many of whom have served for many years. They deserve our gratitude for the time and effort they have invested in the journal, which allowed it to grow and become the top karst science journal. The quality of the Associate Editors and the Editorial Board is very important for the journal's scientific "health," and my selection of whom to invite to join in the future will reflect this belief. I believe that young, energetic, and promising scientists can do an excellent job, even if they do not yet have dozens of publications. As you will see on the inside cover, more people will be added in the coming years to the Editorial Board, while others who have served on the journal's board for many years will be replaced.

In this editorial, I want to share with you some of my plans for the journal. An important part of *IJS* continuing to be a high-impact journal is making it more attractive to authors, and to do so, I plan to put a serious emphasis on keeping the review process quick. In particular, I strive to have the first editorial decision within 40 days of the submission date. It is my goal that the time from submission to online publication will be reduced further during my tenure, so that within six months of first submission, the authors will see the paper published. The success of this endeavor will largely depend on the cooperation, efficiency, and timeliness of our referees and, of course, on authors submitting their best research to the journal. Finding the appropriate referee for a particular paper is not always easy, and this can delay the review process significantly. Reviewing a manuscript takes time, and people in the academic community are often overwhelmed with teaching, research, and administrative duties, making the incentives to review smaller than the incentives to write our own papers. Nevertheless, the peer review system depends on referees; therefore, I expect authors who contribute to *IJS* to be willing to participate in the review process when invited. Such cooperation will improve the journal significantly.

Another strategy aimed at increasing the quality of the journal will be to ensure a fair balance among the submitted papers, reflecting the large diversity of karst and cave disciplines. In addition, I plan to support the geographic diversity of papers we publish, even if the *IJS* Editorial Group may have to be more actively involved in editing some papers (e.g., from developing countries in Africa, Asia, and South America) with authors to make them more readable and of higher impact to our community.

It is important for *IJS* to continue attracting high-quality articles that garner interest and excitement in a growing readership within the karst/cave community and beyond. However, this depends on you, our authors and readers. Therefore, please consider this editorial an open invitation to support the growth of *IJS* by submitting your research results so that we can continue to publish high-quality manuscripts.

Bogdan P. Onac

Editor, *IJS*